



## **f40 Executive Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, 16 January 2019 at LGA Offices, Smith Square, Westminster**

### **1. Attendances, apologies and changes to committee membership**

**Present:** Cllr James McInnes (Chair); Doug Allan, (Secretary); Karen Westcott (DTW); Margaret Judd, (Dorset CC); Cllr Michael Appleyard (Bucks CC); Cllr Peter Downes (Cambs Schools Forum); Carole Thomson, (Oxfordshire Schools Forum); Julia Harnden (ASCL); Jon Pearsall, (Regency High School Gov, Worcs); Gwyn Williams, (Lymm High School, Warrington); Will Morgan, (Gloucestershire Schools Forum & The Cotswold School); Keith Myers, (Executive Member, City of York).

**Apologies:** Sir Gary Streeter MP (Vice Chair); Laura Smith MP (Vice Chair); Cllr Ivan Ould (Leics CC); Cllr Roger Gough (Kent CC); Cllr Nicole Meardon (Chester & Cheshire West); Cllr Gordon Jones (Suffolk CC); Bernadette Hunter, (Staffs Headteacher); Bob Standley (East Sussex CC); Edwina Grant (Education Consultant); Joe Jefferies (Nottinghamshire); Richard Soper (Worcester Community Trust); Caroline Brand and Sue Alexander (Worcs CC); Christine Atkinson (ERYC); Sara Harding (Head, Regency High School; Andy Mellor (NAHT); Jackie Smith (CEO Brunel SEN MAT & Uplands Educational Trust); Cllr Alex Dale, (Derbyshire CC); Steve Edmonds (NGA); Deborah Myers (Head of Education & Schools, ERYC); Leora Cruddas (CEO The Confederation of Schools Trusts).

**New Members:** The Chair welcomed Will Morgan, Gwyn Williams and Keith Myers to their first Executive Committee meeting. He also welcomed Steve Edmonds (NGA), Andy Mellor (NAHT), Leora Cruddas and Deborah Myers (ERYC) as members of the Executive Committee, though they were unable to attend today.

**Resignation:** DA reported that long-standing Executive Committee member Chris Chapman (Cheshire Schools Forums) had tendered his resignation. DA has thanked Chris for his contribution to the group's campaign.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held 15 October 2018**

The minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record of the meeting. The matter of the meeting with Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee, was raised but is dealt with elsewhere in the agenda.

JMcl said he would like a Deputy Chair to be appointed to ensure continuity should he ever be unavailable. DA invited any committee member interested to submit an expression of interest so that the new Deputy Chair could be confirmed at the next meeting in April.

### **3. Confirmation of Laura Smith MP as Vice Chair (Labour)**

The committee welcomed Laura as a Vice Chair and look forward to working with her in the future.

PD suggested, in the interests of political fairness, a Liberal Democrat MP should also be invited to stand as Vice Chair of the group, and suggested Layla Moran, of Oxford West and Abingdon. JMcl asked PD to speak to Layla about joining the group, and then DA will follow up with an official invitation.

### **4. Matters to be Noted**

- MPs' Briefing in Parliament – 15 October 2018 – although not as well attended as previous briefings, some high-ranking MPs were present, and the event went well. **NOTED**
- Secretary of State's visit to Devon – 8 November 2018 – JMcl reported that an invitation to visit Devon had been taken up by SoS and it was a very constructive couple of days. **NOTED**

- Letter to The Chancellor – 16 November 2018 and response from Minister for School Standards – 30 November. **NOTED**
- Notes of Collaboration meeting – 22 November. **NOTED**
- High Needs – County/London Treasurer’s letter to Secretary of State – 27 November 2018. **NOTED**
- FMRT/Executive meeting with DfE – 5 December 2018 – This was a very useful and constructive meeting at which f40 presented its updated National Funding Formula proposals. DfE’s comments on f40’s approach will be discussed at the next FMRT later this month. **NOTED**
- New Year’s honours – Congratulations were offered to former f40 chairman Ivan Ould on receiving his OBE and to Gary Streeter MP, who was knighted. DA indicated that he had written to both recipients on behalf of the Executive. **NOTED**

## 5. f40 Research on School Block Transfers to High Needs

DA reported on the research undertaken among f40 members on transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block and he thanked everyone for their cooperation. As a reminder, some initial research was done in late November/early December and then, after the announcement by the Secretary of State on 16 December that additional cash was being made available for High Needs, a further check was made on the positions being taken by our members. The full spreadsheet of responses has been circulated to all f40 School Finance Managers and an analysis of the results was presented to the Executive. DA will send a copy of both documents to Tony Foot at the DfE. **AGREED**

DA has subsequently been asked by an authority to consider asking all member LAs about what they will do if the Government refuses their transfer request. DA said he was not inclined to go back to LAs to ask further questions and the committee agreed.

MA said everyone was tired of one-off funding. MJ said longevity of funding and rolling out three-year funding programmes were in the f40 Briefing Paper.

## 6. Isos Partnership High Needs presentation

Natalie Parrish (Isos) gave a well-received presentation on the findings of its recent research – “Have we reached a tipping Point? – Trends in spending for children and young people with SEND in England”.

NP thanked DA and the f40 group for encouraging LAs to take part in the research, saying that out of 93 LAs that took part, 31 were from f40.

She said all LAs who responded said it was a matter of ‘when’ not ‘if’ they went into deficit over HN expenditure.

NP included extracted information that showed the trajectory for f40 LAs.

In thanking NP for her presentation, JMCI said it was important that the research findings fed into f40’s campaign plan for the next year. DA asked what reaction the report had received from Government. NP said they had detected a willingness to listen, but that it was clear the LAs must continue to press for change.

MA asked if the research had included “school transport” and NP confirmed it did not.

MA said unless budgets were increased at school level to assist them in funding SEN programmes, it would have a knock-on effect into the social care sector too.

MJ said when the HN Block transfer took place and the EHCPs were introduced, the number of 16-25-year-olds requiring an EHCP was expected to be much smaller than has turned out to be the case. NP said the EHCP 16-25 cohort is growing by 15,000 people a year and an increasing number of new EHCPs for people in that age bracket is growing because it allows colleges to plug into extra funding. She said LAs had reported that it was having a massive detrimental impact on their budgets.

GW said he was interested to see what impact the new Ofsted criteria would have on how schools were inspected with regards to support they gave to HN pupils.

WM said, as an Ofsted inspector, the aim was to look behind the data and to have a more flexible approach to how children are being supported, rather than just looking at scores. He said the new inspections would be broader and more balanced.

DA said he had already shared the Isos Partnership research with f40 LAs but thought they would appreciate sight of the presentation slides used today, especially those which include specific mentions of the f40 trajectory. NP agreed to adjust the presentation and provide a short note that DA can circulate to f40 members.

#### **6. f40 School Funding Paper/Update on Modelling**

DA suggested that everybody digest the recently prepared updated paper: A National Funding Formula for Schools, which has been circulated, and then express their views before the next FMRT meeting on January 28, when the paper will be discussed and further developed.

PD said he had concerns about the impact of the Lump Sum on small, rural schools as some may have to be closed as they are no longer viable under the new National Funding Formula (NFF). He said where rural schools close the LA are likely to have to pick up the cost of transporting those children to other schools, which they cannot afford. And the level of Lump Sum impacts on other areas of funding.

MA said the full impact of the NFF had not yet been felt as it was being gradually rolled out and LAs are still learning. He asked if Government was going to review the NFF, or were they relying on people complaining about it?

MJ said she didn't know how it was going to be reviewed by Government. She agreed that the fact the soft formula had been extended was likely to frustrate any review process. However, f40 is in constant touch with the DfE and they are fully aware of the group's views that further change is essential. JH said it was her belief that the NFF would be constantly looked at.

CT said small schools who did not receive the sparsity grant were under threat.

JMcl said when DA wrote to LAs last year inviting them to become members, one had come back suggesting the f40 message was confused.

GW said, as a new member, he was unsure about the f40 message. He said f40 had argued that funding was unfair in the past, but he still felt it was wrong that some LAs were given more money than others. He said he hoped f40 continued to focus on the unfairness of the new system. He said a sector minimum should continue and said he wasn't convinced that schools in disadvantaged areas needed much bigger budgets to operate than other schools. He added that that it is the allocation of cash that appears to him to be the biggest issue and that asking for more money at the moment

seemed unrealistic, but it was down to the redistribution of the money available. DA reminded everyone that f40 had encouraged redistribution of funding, but the Government had not seen fit to follow that path.

MJ said the NFF still contained and “locked-in” all of the old inequalities that protected some LAs and gave additional funding. She said f40 was about ensuring the Government adopted a **fair** national funding formula and that the differential between the highest and lowest funded was fair. JMCl confirmed that the focus of f40 was to show that the new formula was unfair and still locked in the unfairness of the old system.

JH said f40 had to be very careful not to mix up two separate issues. She said the NFF was about how money for schools was distributed. How much money was being distributed was a separate issue. She said the way the formula is being applied is not working at the moment. She said the funding of schools had to be tackled with long-term funding in mind.

WM and CT said the formula was unfair, and CT said it was unmanageable in the future. GW suggested the NFF had fractured f40’s principles. He said that he sees relatively well funded schools all around him...and they are protected.

To help new Executive members and those new to the fair funding campaign, KM said it would be a good idea to have a synopsis of the history of f40, what it has achieved and its current focus. JMCl said f40’s purpose was to make the current funding formula fair but agreed more clarity on message was needed.

DA said the f40 paper on funding could take account of such comments, which would be put to the DfE for its consideration.

## **7. Draft Campaign Strategy**

DA presented the outline of a suggested campaign strategy for the next 12 months. It was agreed that the Government’s Spending Review would be the main focus. JMCl said in Devon they were asking schools to put case studies together, which they could then forward to their local MPs, who in turn could put pressure on the Secretary of State. He said it was an excellent way of ensuring that MPs were aware of what was happening in their constituencies. He suggested that schools in f40 member areas could also do the same. DA said that he would circulate Devon’s materials to all member LAs when they are available.

WM asked if there was a proforma that could be given to schools and parents to complete to support f40. DA explained that similar things had been done as part of specific campaigns in the past. He suggested that this is something the 2019 f40 campaign could include.

JP said it was important to have a robust campaign, but one that didn’t cause Government or others to break their relationship with f40.

KM said that if a petition was launched to encourage parents to call for fairer funding, his LA would be happy to be involved.

JMCl said MPs were the best weapons as they would be looking to get voters on their sides. MA said it was imperative that the message on school funding was consistent among everyone and that funding was a serious issue. He suggested getting stats in front of ministers on a regular basis.

GW said he was struggling to pin down why some LAs got more money than others, and MJ said it was historic. GW suggested MPs be shown stats that prove their areas are less funded. DA said this

could be done but the league tables on funding had changed: there are now four different blocks of funding. CT said School Block funding was the important one to compare.

JMcl suggested a core group meet in the next few weeks to discuss the 2019 f40 campaign. It was agreed after the meeting that JMcl, DA, MA, KW and CT meet on February 18. DA will ask if one of the headteachers on the Executive will also attend.

#### **8. Collaboration Activities – meeting scheduled for 23 January 2019**

DA reported that he and MJ would be attending this meeting to discuss planned collaborative activities and events.

#### **9. NGA Funding the Future Campaign – 25 February to 2 March 2019**

DA reported on this initiative by the NGA. Information about the campaign can be accessed via f40's website Homepage.

#### **10. Proposed meeting with Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee**

At previous meetings of the Executive Committee it was reported that f40 should seek a meeting with Mr Halfon to discuss f40's position. DA reported that Vice Chair GS has made approaches though no date has yet been suggested. DA will report further in due course. **NOTED**

#### **11. MATs**

DA reported that as part of his investigations into how to involve f40-area MATs in the fair funding campaign, he had contacted the Confederation of School Trusts and spoken with its CEO Leora Cruddas. She had indicated a willingness to attend this Executive meeting but had had to withdraw at the last minute. DA referred to the conversation he had had about f40 embracing MATs and her view that this might be less than productive as MATs are increasingly at odds with LAs in terms of school funding.

PD said MATs are funded in the same way as LA schools and that MATs sat on School Forums and were experiencing the same funding issues. MA also said some academies within a MAT received less funding per pupil than other academies in the same MAT.

It was AGREED that Leora Cruddas should be invited to the next meeting so she could find out what f40 is about and whether she wished to join the Executive.

#### **12. LGA Conference – Bournemouth – 2 to 4 July 2019**

DA reported on his enquiries with the LGA. He has looked at the idea of a fringe meeting or Exhibition/Enquiry Desk and concluded that the latter would best suit f40's requirements. However, the cost of hiring the space would be £4,012 + Vat for a 9m square unit or £1,872 + Vat for a 4m square unit. Additional costs would be travel, accommodation and expenses for those who were prepared to attend and handle the f40 desk. DA has pursued the idea of a 'partnership arrangement' with other organisations campaigning for fair funding e.g. ASCL, NAHT, NGA, but none of those approached have so far responded.

JMcl said he was more interested in f40, or similar, presenting at the LGA on the issue of school funding. MA suggested that a presentation of the Isos research into High Needs would be an excellent subject for the LGA to include.

KM said it may be too late to secure a speaker or new item for this year's LGA, but suggested f40 distribute leaflets and look to arrange something for next year.

CT said there were other education conferences going on where fair funding could be raised. She will ensure that the CEO of the NGA is aware of the Isos research as a potential subject for their conferences.

JMCI asked DA to check the conference agenda to see how education will be covered this year and to see if any speaker slots are still available that f40 might fill.

### **13. Succession Planning – Secretary to the Group**

DA updated the committee on this matter. A Business Case prepared for consideration by Derbyshire County Council (the group's bankers) has been approved and it agrees a three-year contract with DTW (to 31 March 2022). In the third year f40 will have to commence a procurement process in respect of the service from 1 April 2022 onwards. This will require the hiring of procurement experts. DA confirmed that his attendance at the next Executive Committee on 17 April will be his final involvement. Arrangements will be put in place for a smooth handover and the maintenance of DA's behind the scenes informal involvement in support of Karen Westcott of DTW, who will take over the secretarial and PR responsibilities.

### **14. Membership Report and Financial Update**

As requested at the last Executive Committee, DA has communicated with 13 local authorities about them joining f40. No new members have resulted from the approach.

DA reported that the number of fully paid up members in 2018-19 is currently 41. Members have been charged a reduced fee of £500 this financial year.

DA reported on the current funds held in its bank account.

### **15. Date of future Executive Committee meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 17 April 2019 at the LGA offices in London.

Other dates for meetings this year are 17 July 2019 and 16 October 2019 and next year on 22 January 2020. KW to send diary invitations to members for these meetings.

### **16. Any Other Business**

There were no additional points raised.